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THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2006

A Job That Will Do Itself?

I keep hearing about how we are poised to take back power this year. I certainly hope this is true, since 1) I generally support them and their positions and 2) it would mean that Mont. gets another senator and my job is going to be a lot easier and more successful. I'm not completely sold on this though. This [article](#) raises some good points about the strategy of letting them destroy themselves. While they've done a good job of destroying themselves so far, I'm afraid that without a strong message of why the Dems are a good alternative, all this bad publicity could be for naught. I keep coming back to the idea that even if you don't like the pres, you know where he stands. People can understand that. By not having a strongly defined position, the Dems leave themselves open to be painted by the other side, which hasn't worked out too well for them in the last few cycles.

A few thoughts: I had dinner with my better half and some WWE representatives last night. The WWE folks impressed me. They're really on the ball and, while doing some great stuff, know how to get some great publicity out of it. I guess that is why they're the pros.

[And who says Antonin Scalia isn't warm and cuddly?](#)

posted by N @ 3:11 PM [0 comments](#) [links to this post](#)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2006

Things Heat Up

At the moment, Mont. is not my primary focus. You see, this weekend is the biggest annual event in wrestling, Wrestlemania. This year it is here, and thanks to my wonderful better half, my friend and I are going to not only the show, but a number of other

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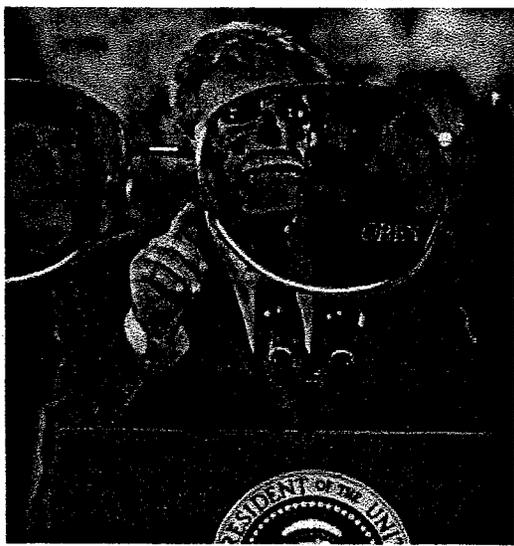
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associated events. On Friday, I'm going to help my wife with a big event that her organization is throwing with WWE to promote teen reading. On top of getting to skip my regular job for a day, I get to help run the show and meet two of the wrestlers. With this big event, the show, and company staying with us, I also get to deal with my current job's annual meeting, which will require me to work both Saturday and Sunday. So I will get up and work both days, and then run out to go see wrestling, and then work next week, and then drive three days to Mont. on the weekend. I have a feeling that by the time I get to Mont, I'm going to be very tired. Unfortunately, that is when the real hard work will start.

PS- Dan wanted a picture, so here you go. As a fan of the movie "They Live," I got quite a kick out of this. If you haven't seen this cinema classic starring Roddy Piper, I highly recommend it!



posted by N @ [2:55 PM](#)

[0 comments](#)

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TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2006

Life Is in the Little Things

I always assumed Bank One was huge, and that after being bought by Chase, they were even huger. I guess they really can't be that big though, if they don't have a single branch in Mont. Lots of little things like this keep cropping up as I try to plan my move to Mont. How do you pay your bills? Who will clean the fish tanks? What about all those things I had planned between now and November? Luckily (or unluckily, depending on how you view things), I'll still have my same phone and number, email can always be checked anywhere, and I didn't have all that much

going on anyways. Still, moving my life for months at a time is daunting task. I'm sure I'll feel better about things once I can get in the car and go. Once that committment is made, that bridge is crossed, there will be no turning back. Then, I can only look forward at the road ahead.

posted by N @ 2:02 PM

[1 comments](#)

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MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2006

How To Completely Change Your Life in Less Than a Week

As a movie buff, I've been inundated with the idea that people should make their lives worth living by following their dreams. In films, people can just wake up one morning and plunge into something new and different and wholly rewarding. While this idea has always held a certain appeal, it certainly never seemed very realistic. In modern life, how could you walk away from friends, family, bills, work, well, all the things that really define us in life. Aren't there just too many little things that preclude us from making this jump?

Until about ten days ago, I would have said, yes, most definitely. That all changed with a series of phone calls and emails with some folks in the great state of Mont. All this started when I sent a resume to an acquaintance from my last foray into politics. He sent out an email to the former election staff saying that if anyone was interested in a position for the upcoming cycle, to send him their materials and he would forward them to the right people. I sent the email and forgot about it. I couldn't see how it would hurt, but the chances of anything coming of it were slim to none. Imagine my surprise when I received a message on my phone from a staffer in Mont., looking for organizers for a hotly contested race out there. I spoke with a few people out there, but nothing much came of it. It was too far, too life changing, to just get up and leave for a organizer position. Hell, to take the pay cut would have killed me financially too.

As days passed, I figured that this whole misadventure of phone tag had come to an end. I was surprised several days later to hear from someone else in Mont. who wanted to talk further. After a good discussion, she asked for references. Since I was going to be out of town, I just quickly sent off several email addresses to her, not putting too much thought or concern into things. On Monday, I saw an email from one of my references who had bcc'ed me on his response to her. I was surprised to read in her email to him that they were considering me for a larger position. I was a little

shocked by this, but it was certainly an exciting development. Thankfully my references came back well (I owe all of you one!). Later that night I spoke with the director of the organization while standing in the foyer of an Ethiopian restaurant while my better half waited for me. It became pretty apparent from this conversation that I was on my way to being offered a good position, starting as close to April 1 as I could manage. Thinking about how life altering this would be, I'm not ashamed to admit that I was terrified. I had a good, steady job. I had a pretty comfortable life. I had a loving wife who I would be leaving for almost seven months. The stark reality of what this would entail reared its ugly head. This wasn't the movies, this was real life. You don't just quit your job and leave your wife to go to Mont. for seven months. Life is too complicated for that. Luckily for me, I have the best wife in the world. She encouraged me to take the chance and go. Knowing that this is, in all likelihood, a once in a lifetime shot, she told me to go and give it a shot. With her encouragement, I knew that I could do it and should do it. Hell, how often do you get a chance to go play politics in the Big Sky? With much, much trepidation, I submitted my resignation the next day. My boss was great about it, so the stage was set. Now I just have to really work up the nerve to walk away from my life and go into the unknown. Mont., here I come!

posted by N @ 3:23 PM

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SATURDAY, APRIL 08, 2006

Well, off to Mont. (or at least somewhere in South Dakota) today. Now I'll really get to see where the buffalo roam! And if all [this](#) doesn't make my job easier, I have to wonder about people.

posted by N @ 9:31 AM

[0 comments](#)

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THURSDAY, APRIL 06, 2006

The Last Day

The last day at a job always feels a little weird. Everyone knows that today is it, but you're there and business has to go on as usual. Today is no different. No talking about taking care of it tomorrow, or the call next week. Next week I'll be exploring a place I've never been before and breathing air I've never breathed before. Anyways, I won't be sad to not have to deal with the horrible mess that is my desk anymore. All in all, cube life has been decent to me, but the idea of being out in the world, taking on real responsibility, and helping run the show keeps me going. Mont., here I come!

As for the news, [we wonder why the world isn't too fond of us at the moment?](#)

Late addition: If Bush isn't impeached over [this](#), what does it say about our country and our democracy? Clinton lies about cheating on his wife and he is impeached. Bush betrays a government agent for political reasons and we're told to bite our tongues or we don't love our country? How much more proof do the American people need that Bush views himself as the law, rather than as a servant of the law?

posted by N @ 9:17 AM

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Wrapping Things Up

As my time here comes closer to its end, I'm struggling to remember all the little things that need to be taken care of before I leave. Doing this reminds you of all the little pieces that make up our day to day lives. It will be a relief to get to Mont so that I can quit worrying about everything I have to do here at home. As I turn my mind towards the Big Sky, I've started to wonder what will happen if the opponent's candidacy crumbles. In my last campaign experience, I finished the election in another state because it was decided that W V wasn't competitive. While I hope we cruise to victory in Mont., I dread the thought of things getting out of hand there and them sending the field staff elsewhere to finish the race. A body can only handle so much upheaval at a time. As for my second to last day at work here, it was good. We had a long meeting to pour all the accumulated knowledge out of my head. While it may have been woefully little, I hope that it will make their transition easier. The folks in this office, especially my boss, are fantastic and I will miss them. I guess being on your way out makes everything look a little rosier.

posted by N @ 4:09 PM

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TUESDAY, APRIL 04, 2006

The Long Weekend

Things have been incredibly hectic here over the weekend. My soon to be former job had its annual meeting, that had me up at 6 and working all weekend. On top of that, my friend Henry was in town and we went to Wrestlemania and a few other wrestling related things which kept me out fairly late. All in all, I'm dragging today and have to start seriously thinking about Mont. now. With my departure date looming, the amount of preparation seems a bit daunting. For today though, I'm going to sneak out early and take a nap. I know that I'll have sweet dreams now that Tom DeLay is out. Hopefully this is a good omen of things to come!

Addendum: Looks like he is finally getting some attention. Very interesting [article](#) from one of my favorites, Matt Taibbi. "Spanking the Donkey," his book on the 2004 race will go down with "Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72" as a classic of political writing. Highly recommended.



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FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2006

Getting Into the Grind

Campaigning life has set in. We are currently hard at work getting petitions. Unfortunately, our goal for the day seems high for a state with less than one million residents. This will be a test of my organizational mettle, which is suffering every day that I have to live and work out of my car. Luckily, I have a place and I move in tomorrow. It isn't much, but I have my own room and bathroom. It will be nice to unpack after living out of various suitcases since last Saturday. Now, when I can just get an office and a computer. My first organizer has been kind enough to let me steal her laptop away long enough to hit my email each day. Life without a desk and computer is tough when I'm in pure information acquisition mode. Hopefully, I won't lose too much along the way. Light at the end of the tunnel though, we have Sunday off. Happy Easter!

posted by N @ 6:45 PM

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2006

Greetings

I'm staying with my first organizer and her mom tonight. One of the things that I had forgotten about campaigning is the family element. Being thrown into this huge, exhausting task together really builds a feeling of kinship with your fellow campaigners. I've spent the last few nights on the couch of a couple in Helena who joke about running a boarding house. Just about every new organizer who has to stay in the state capital for a few days gets their couch. The last few days they have had two house guests as another of their friends is staying for several weeks while he finds a place. Four people in a relatively small house, sharing one bathroom. It makes you friends really fast. Tomorrow night I move to a different guest room. Hopefully I can find my own place soon

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so I can unpack and quite living out of suitcases and my car. Ah, the campaign life.....

posted by N @ 11:18 PM

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SUNDAY, APRIL 09, 2006

Well, Here I Am.....

Greetings from Helena! My trip out here was long but uneventful. I spent last night in Rapid City, SD after a 13 hour drive. Today was much more managable at 8 1/2. All in all, much less than I was led to believe and an all round easy drive. I guess when there is no traffic and the speed limit is 75, making time isn't hard. The people out here all seem great so far, so that helps. Someone has already offered a couch for the night, so I'm set until Wednesday when I head north for another couch. Life will feel much better when I can settle in a bit and unpack some things. Politically, I've been really pleased with what I've heard so far. I was a little concerned about the two big candidates and some of the things that they specificy didn't mention on their webpages, but I was told that it isn't mentioned because they are relatively progressive on these issues so it doesn't have to be a big deal. That makes me feel better all around. It's hard to talk about a candidate through clenched teeth. Check out the Politics One link to the right for links to their pages if you're curious.

posted by N @ 8:37 PM

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FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 2006

Sleepy Little Towns?

It's interesting to get to know the people out here in Mont. The local issues out here aren't unique to this area by a long shot, but I was rather surprised to hear some of them. In the town just north of where I am there is intense gentrification going on. What has always been a quite town at the foot of a ski mountain is now becoming a haven for people who want million dollar homes that they can live in for a few weeks or months a year. As in most places, the locals are torn over the whole thing. Some enthusiastically welcome the newcomers and their much needed money, but others are alarmed at the sense of their home losing what made it home. The dramatic increase in property taxes that comes with land shooting up in value is another issue that they are forced to grapple with. Not something I expected to run into in this part of the world, but a very real issue for this beautiful valley in the shadows of the mountains.

posted by N @ 9:15 PM

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THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2006

A Fine Art

Since we don't have any candidates yet, our main task is collecting signatures for a ballot initiative. It's a pretty straightforward initiative that people of most every political strip can get behind. The challenge is to get them to sign. The key to getting lots of signatures is finding a high traffic area that you can stand and ask people. Unfortunately, the management of most of these places don't have much sympathy for petition gatherers. My coworker and I have been asked to leave the property of most of the grocery stores in town already, but we've found that the post office works well. It is hard to find high traffic areas that are public property anymore. Seems like everywhere that you might

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find a good number of people is private and they don't want you there. Ah well. We haven't gone into any places of business or harassed anyone who didn't want to talk, so I don't feel too bad about things. Most of this animosity comes from an initiative a few years ago to legalize marijuana is what I hear. I guess they weren't as considerate of people. You would think they would be a little more mellow, but I guess not.

posted by N @ **10:21 AM**

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THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2006

The Sweet Office Life

This week we are finally getting our office open. It's amazing the little things that you take for granted in professional life that aren't there when you don't have an office. I've been putting everything in a notebook for the last three weeks, so my poor little notebook is about to burst at the seams. When I need to print some lists, I can't because my coworker's Mac uses Safari which causes formatting problems and the library uses open office which has a hard time with file extensions. I never imagined that I would be longing for a regular old Windows/Microsoft Office pc, but that's the position I find myself in now. Ah well, the office is almost up and running so soon I'll be able to spread out and get to work. Big weekend coming up. We're doing a big canvas, so there will be lots of folks out and about. Luckily the weather looks like it will be nice so the day can be successful for all. Nothing like a nice day to make any canvassing go better.

posted by N @ 11:51 AM

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TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2006

Lay of the Land

Saturday was the a big fundraiser. It brought out all the candidates and all the dedicated activists. This was a great chance to get to meet these people and figure out how to make the campaign fit into what is already here. Fortunately, the candidates seem like a good bunch with some real workers among them. It makes work easier when you have good, hard working candidates. Up until fairly recently, I get the impression that good candidates were hard to find here. The quality of this cycles crop bodes well for things this year. In other good news, our office will be officially opening in the next few days. We now have a lease and are just waiting on phones and internet. Not having to work

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out of coffee shops, the library, and my car anymore will make life immensely better. All in all, things are looking up in the Big Sky!

posted by N @ 4:54 PM

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THURSDAY, MAY 04, 2006

Out and About

This week I had the opportunity to drive across the continental divide. I had to head that way for a meeting and the drive proved to be an interesting experience. I hadn't been east of the mountains before, into the land of the high plains. I drove along the southern edge of the park, which proved to be as beautiful a drive as I'd imagined. It had snowed the day before so everything had a fresh, thin layer of snow on it, adding to the views. I did take a few pictures, which I hope to get up next week. Once you leave the mountains, you find yourself on the rolling plains that make up the rest of the state. It makes for some interesting landscapes and views, especially when you can see the one cloud pouring down precipitation (a mix of snow and rain) from about 50 miles off before it gets you. I passed through a town, on the edge of the reservation, which claims to be the coldest place in America, and they may be right. The wind was howling down from Canada and it felt like the coldest place in America. Next week I hope to head close to the Idaho boarder, so hopefully I can get some more pictures and get them uploaded. Until then....

posted by N @ 8:39 PM [0 comments](#) [links to this post](#)

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MONDAY, MAY 08, 2006

Now We're Moving!

I'm excited because today we get phones and internet. Life will immediately become much, much easier. I'm not sure how I've been able to function for nearly a month without these tools, but needless to say this will be an improvement and my cell phone will thank me for the reduced workload. The office grand opening event is soon, so with that under our belts, we'll be moving on into the next phase of things and I couldn't be more ready.

posted by N @ **11:39 AM**

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SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2006

Odds and Ends

I'm looking forward to my better half coming out to see me next weekend. Unfortunately, the newspaper headline today read "Memorial Day Snow?". Not exactly what I had in mind for her first trip out here. Hopefully, they'll be wrong as usual since it would be a shame to not get to enjoy all the nature around here on her visit. In other news, I met the governor today at an event. He seems like a nice enough guy and he has the populist thing down. It would be hard to be a successful politician around here if you wore a suit and tie all the time. Definitely not the style, which has rendered about half the clothes I brought out here useless. Ah well.

posted by N @ 8:44 PM

[2 comments](#)[links to this post](#)

TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2006

The Dog Days of May

Definitely into the grind of petitioning now. We are experiencing firsthand the law of diminishing returns. Every day is a challenge to find new people that we haven't talked to yet and new places to petition that we haven't been thrown out of yet. At this point, a number of us are just going door to door talking to people. While it's good to get out and talk to voters, it isn't exactly an efficient use of time. Ah well, it will be over with the primary on June 6, I hope. Speaking of the primary, it is heating up. All the main candidates have spots on tv and signs going up. You can tell primary season is upon us. Luckily, everyone is still on good behavior. It's still way too close to call, but it should be an exciting finish. Whoever comes out of the primary should have some momentum, so hopefully they can keep that going right into the summer and make everyone's life easier. I'm ready for people to vote and give me a candidate. After that, life will seem much

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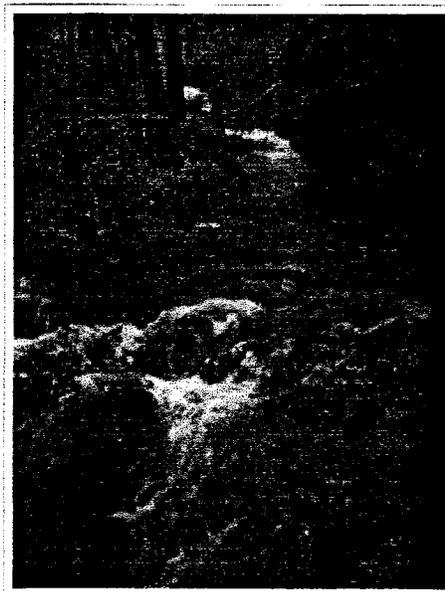
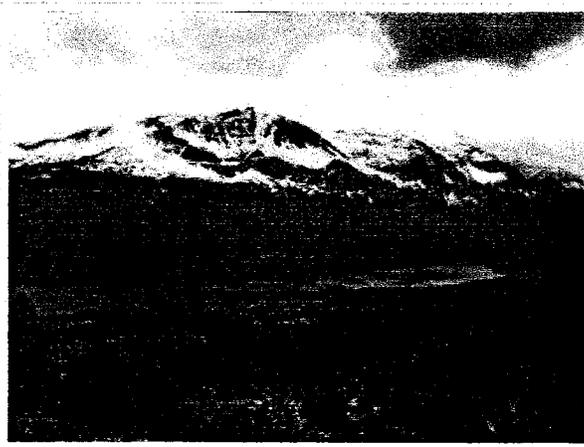
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MONDAY, MAY 29, 2006

Beth's Visit



It was really great to see Beth. It hadn't been two months, but it seemed like ages. I was able to not work the entire time, so we

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got to have some fun. The highlight was going to Glacier National Park on Saturday and Sunday. The weather wasn't great, but with scenery that spectacular, it was still great. Here are few pictures with more to come.



posted by N @ 8:05 PM

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THURSDAY, JUNE 08, 2006

Two Interesting Articles

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From [The Hill](#)

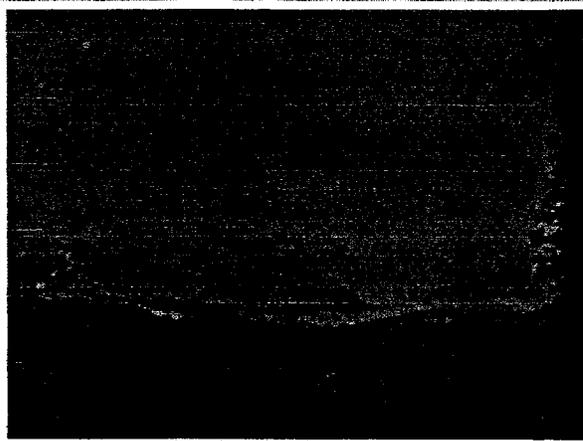
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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 07, 2006

And then there was one....



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Well folks,
we now
have a
candidate!
Jon Tester
shocked
pretty
much
everyone,
including
his
supporters,

by crushing John Morrison. Morrison had been the front runner for months, had more money, and seemed to be cruising. Even after his ethics problem came to light, he was still fairly consistently ahead in polls. In the end, I think Tester did a good job of convincing people that he was the one to take on Burns over ethics and was more electable. This peaked at the perfect time for him, and Morrison's supporters abandoned him for the most part. Tough for Morrison, since he seemed to have this locked up for a long time, but I think in the end his affair and the related problems sunk him. Tester, while not running a dirty campaign by today's standards, was able to successfully plant doubt in people's mind and build on it. Very interesting stuff all around. It was a really long day, but luckily now petitions are over for us, so I can really get down to the job I came here to do. And last but not least, a few more pictures from Beth's visit.

posted by N @ 10:44 PM [0 comments](#) [links to this post](#)



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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2006

We're Off!

Attended a training over the weekend in the capital. It was great to get see my peers from around the state and compare notes. As I told my organizer, no one who wasn't done this job can fully comprehend this job. If nothing else, it was good to get to complain to a group that understands the situation. Met the candidate again, and he impresses me more and more every time I see him. Should be a colorful race, especially considering the other sides relentless negative campaign. I hope regular folks are as sick of the attack ads as I am, and it is only June

posted by N @ 4:16 PM

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FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 2006

Busy, busy, busy

Things are exceptionally hectic at the moment. The candidates debate on Sunday just north of us, so we had to put together an event for this since the debate is closed to the public. The broadcasters association is sponsoring it, so it will be on tv and the radio though. Check it out on CSpan! We're having a get together afterwards. Should be a beautiful day and a good event. People seem very excited for it, since that kind of thing doesn't happen around here often. Hope it goes well!

posted by N @ **9:26 PM**

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SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2006

The Debate

While I haven't had a chance to watch the debate, I hear it went well. We had an event afterwards that was a big success. We had a nice crowd, great weather, and lots of cool stuff for people. Since our guy is an organic farmer, we called the organic farmers in the area and they came out and cooked stuff picked that morning. It was by far the healthiest thing I've eaten in months. Joe Klein from Time Magazine was there and interviewed him at our event. I'm hoping we get a mention next week or whenever. Well, off to bed after a long week. Kind of sad that the new week starts in 11 hours.

posted by N @ **11:13 PM**

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 05, 2006

July Is Off and Running

This is an interesting column about our guy. They did this interview at our post-debate event, so that makes it pretty cool. Got to be in a couple of parades for the 4th. I think it was the first parade I'd been in since the Boy Scouts marched in the Clarksburg Christmas Parade about a million years ago.

posted by N @ 4:30 PM

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THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2006

The Better Half

My better half shows again why she is the better half. She never shys away from telling them what she thinks, even if it's before congress.

posted by N @ [10:55 AM](#) [0 comments](#) [links to this post](#)

SUNDAY, JULY 09, 2006

Looking for a Job?

As July moves on, I'm hoping that we get our next staff person for this office soon. I've been hearing that it will happen soon for about a month, so I'm ready to get someone new in here. As soon as this person comes on board, they are going to have a ton of work to do and will have to get up to speed fast, so the sooner the better. We are doing well in getting people into the office, so that part of the job is going well. My coworker in the office has been out of town this weekend, and it's making me a bit jealous, but I get to go home in less than a month, so that is good. I'm a little scared to go home, because it will be hard to come back out and leave again, but I'll find a way. If nothing else, at least football season is just around the corner, not that I'll get to watch much of it. It's nice to know that election day is getting closer and all this hard work is starting to add up to something exciting.

posted by N @ [10:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#) [links to this post](#)

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TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2006

Comings and Goings

Sorry for the long silence. It has been a very busy month on the campaign. I did make it home to see my wife, which was very nice. It was great to get away for a few days and not think about all the stuff I spend every waking moment on lately. In our office we have a couple new people, which is great. Since they have come on board, it has freed me up to do more of the work that I came here to do. Things seem to be moving fast now, and it's only beginning. After Labor Day, everyday will be more intense than the last. You could say things are getting interesting...

posted by N @ 6:46 PM [0 comments](#) [links to this post](#)

Comings and Goings

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TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2006

Interesting article

[This is an interesting little q and a.](#)

posted by N @ 3:11 PM

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2006

It's Time

The ridge line was covered in snow today and our numbers just got a lot bigger. Time is starting to get short and the feeling of things is changing. The pressure is getting upped, and I think people are ready. Everyone knows that this will be a fight right up to the end, so the feeling is "let's do this." My friend who's working back east said that he was bringing out his box of wine for nightly conference calls, so it must be time to get moving.

posted by N @ 11:56 PM

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2006

Busy, Busy, Busy

Sorry for my recent silence. We are reaching the point where every day is insanely busy and at least 14 hours long. With under fifty days to go, the pressure is really building. It's going to be close right up to the end, so our work is even more important. We have all of our staff now, so it's a straight through sprint until the end. I'm learning the charms of managing four other people through this maze. At times it reminds me of teaching, which is both good and bad. Well, back to work now. Less than 1200 hours to go.

posted by N @ 2:12 PM

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